

## Asian American & Pacific Islanders (AAPI) - Houston Community Meeting

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June 6, 2001  
Kim Son Restaurant  
2001 Jefferson  
Houston, Texas  
4:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

### AGENDA:

Welcome & Introduction . . . . The Honorable Gordon Quan, Member At-Large, Houston City Council  
Special Guest . . . . . The Honorable Paul Igasaki, EEOC Vice-Chair  
Goals & Objectives . . . . . Tai-ming Chang, Deputy Director of EPA Region 6's Enforcement Division  
Community Dialogue . . . . . moderated by Tai-ming Chang and  
Rogene Calvert, Councilmember Quan's Chief of Staff  
Brainstorm Session . . . . . Tai-ming Chang  
Closing Remark . . . . . Tai-ming Chang

### NOTES FROM COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

#### 1. Scott Bui (VASAP) - Is EPA looking into the indoor issue at many nail salons that are owned by the Vietnamese or OSHA with the occupational standpoint?

- < Don Nguyen (OSHA): Currently, there is no strategic plan or anything that targets these shops since they are very small. Most of OSHA work is in the Baytown or Pasadena area. However, anyone can contact one of our offices in the Houston area to file a complaint. OSHA will review the complaint, contact the shop, and ask the manager to correct the problem voluntarily. Most of the time this procedure works.

The problem is the ventilation system. It sucks everything into the ceiling, and there is no duct work from the ceiling that leads to the outside; therefore, the materials get stuck in the ceiling and eventually migrate next door.

**Scott Bui (VSAAP) - Many shop owners do not understand the danger of the chemicals that they get involved because the MSDS sheet distorts information to protect the company producing these chemicals. EPA and OSHA might need to set up some guideline to educate them about this?**

- < Don Nguyen (OSHA): I will take this issue back to my office and recommend that we develop an outreach program for these business owners.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): I agree with Mr. Don Nguyen. We need to discuss this issue later today. We will talk about how we, EPA and OSHA, can collaborate on these types of projects. The City of Houston has had several inspections and they have already brought it to EPA's attention about this issue.

#### 2. Dr. Beng Ho (Houston's Mayors Senior Advisory Council) - How do you achieve your goals of providing financial and technical assistance to the community as well as educational assistance to the AAPI students?

- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): We hope that various federal agencies might be able to inform the AAPI community about the grant programs or contracts that they have available for them. At EPA, we have a small EJ grant that every year the community can apply for and actually, one of the group

here, the SOS Boat People, already has a grant with us. For educational assistance, Marla from EPA Washington DC will talk about this.

- < Marla Hendriksson (EPA): On our EPA website (<http://www.epa.gov/aapi>), we have an Education Pipeline which outlines what the Agency is doing for students who want to go into the environmental field like internships, fellowships, scholarships, research opportunities. These are coordinated from Washington DC and syphoned out to all of our 10 regions. We are not only supporting education but also trying to hire students through our entry level or intern program. Our website not only provides information on Educational Assistance but also on Technical Assistance like Grant Writing Workshop.

**3. Karen Tso (Asian American Health Coalition) - Is EPA aware of any kind of data that has been collected on the toxic mold? This is the problem that Houston has been facing lately. I actually know somebody that had to move out of her house immediately because of this. All she could take was her prescription. Everything in the house stayed. How is EPA going to address and inform the public about it?**

- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): I have to take this issue down. I'm not personally familiar with how to address this mold problem.
- < Rex Mann (Texas Department of Health): Our department has microbiologists and toxicologists that are working in this area. Unfortunately, our department is mandated in authorization for inspection, and enforcement action is directed toward commercial type asbestos removal, and toxic substances in commercial business. There are no rules or regulations that authorized our inspectors to work on residential which is very unfortunate. There were some legislative pieces that were worked on during this last legislative session, and that would possibly begin to address the residential issue. However, they didn't get very far. We normally advise people to clean it up whenever they call in to inform us that they have mold in their apartment. We work on those on a case by case basis. If we have a doctor's order that a person has been diagnosed with a mold related problem, then we will work on that case, again on a case by case basis. Other than that, we recommend that people refer to the Yellow Pages for air conditioner companies because they normally know how to address that. We can't make a referral to a specific air conditioner company but recently there are a couple of weekend radio talk shows that has home improvement that people can call in and ask about this mold issue. They can then make a referral to a certain company.

**Karen Tso (Asian American Health Coalition) - I heard they have to call EPA for this; therefore, it is more than the Public Health's issue. Are you trying to gather the data to see how you can educate the public about this toxic mold because it can indirectly cause asthma and many other allergies?**

- < Rex Mann (Texas Department of Health): It's going to be a combination between EPA, the Public Health Agencies, FDA, and the Texas Department of Health to address this. So feel free to give me a call. I'll put you in touch with my people who are working on the indoor air quality.

**4. Richard Chen (MetLife Financial Services) - Does EEOC have any educational or seminar workshops to educate employees about them. We heard about EEOC but we don't know how EEOC can help the employees. I heard one company in Houston forced three Asian managers who worked for them more than 15-20 years to step down. They found a way by merging or acquisition. They also forced 2 Caucasian managers to step down. So can EEOC help them when they are in this kind of situation? Whom can they talk to?**

- < Paul Igasaki (EEOC): We have at least two formal assistance seminars every year, and we have handbooks that explain the law. We can also work with the community if they want. We can talk about sexual harassment, ethnic harassment, glass ceiling, firing based on ethnicity,

national origin, promotion based on gender, or retaliation. For an individual, the best way to find information about us is through our website, [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov). It has statutes, regulations, and a number of guidance explaining how the law works. For an organization, we can provide training and seminars.

The way we help in general is by investigating complaints based on discrimination. We only have jurisdiction if the discrimination is based on race, ethnicity, age (if you are over 40), gender, religion, disability, and retaliation. Also, if you have a doubt, we also have counselors who can help you to determine if you need to file a complaint or not. Technically, we cannot get involved without your complaint.

If you have information that discrimination is going on in your company, you can call our office or call me directly. We can have an investigation with all names protected.

- < Joan Ehrlich (EEOC): Three years ago, we had a group of 20-30 engineers of a particular oil company who gave us information that they were discriminated against. They are PhDs, and have all kinds of patents that they developed for them but not even one has been in the management track. As a result, we interviewed everyone and took between 17 to 30 affidavits and we ended up with a discrimination charge against the company. So if any of you who wish to have a meeting with us, we can keep your name confidential. All we need is the information of what's going on and our Deputy Director, Javier Chacon, and our Outreach Manager, Joe Bontke, can come out and meet privately with you off the premise to find out what you believe has been going on that has an impact against your progression on the job. That can result in a discrimination charge. Normally, that's the most effective way to deal with some of the problems.
- < Rogene Calvert (Councilman Quan's Office): I'd like to take a minute to introduce Samantha Chan and Lucia Pan. Samantha is proficiently in Vietnamese speaking, and Lucia in Mandarin and Cantonese. Our EEOC Office in Houston has been doing a wonderful job in trying to reach to the community by hiring and recruiting people who can really speak our language and know our culture.

5. **Betty Campbell (DOL) - I'm the District Director for the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division. Our agency is an enforcement agency and basically we enforce labor laws. One of the most common laws we're enforcing is the Fair Labor Standards Act which has provisions for the minimum wage, overtime, record keeping and child labor laws. We also enforce other laws such as the Family Medical Leave Act and H-1B, H-2A, and H-2B. With me today is one of our investigators, William Liu. One of my biggest concerns here in Houston area is that we do not receive many complaints from the community. We've just recently made an investigation at a company that makes eggrolls and it has been found in violation. I've been working with Nancy Liu of the Chinese Community. We have been trying to get our message out through our outreach program to let people know what we can do, I'd be happy to give you my card and phone number. William does speak Mandarin and we're willing to take complaints.**

Yesterday we had an Asian lady came in with her husband, an American, and he filed a complaint for her. She was paid less than the minimum wage, and not being paid overtime for all hours she worked which is a violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. If you know people who wants to speak out, we are more than happy to provide our service free of charge. If you know someone please send them to our office. Typically, we do need to have permission to use your name but if there is enough information, we do take in a complaint without permission. Our investigations cover a 2 year period. If there is a violation, we will calculate back wages and in some cases assess a penalty. My purpose here today is to get the word out and as I've said if we can provide any kind of assistance, we will be happy to do so. We are not concerned with a person's nationality and will not ask any questions about

nationality if a person comes to our office seeking assistance.

6. **Anhlan Nguyen (Vietnamese Culture and Science Association)** - We are a group of 300 members. Our association is based in Houston and we have chapters throughout the country. We have a lot of educational programs like computer classes, SAT training classes, Vietnamese heritage language classes. We also have martial art classes for our youngsters here during the summer. We also have other activities like Youth Leadership Development Camp that is held annually, Scholarships to recognize students who excel in their academic study. We have a small center that we don't have any funding. We basically run our programs through our volunteers. All people on our Board of Directors are volunteers. We desperately need some kind of funding that can help us to run our center. Right now we use the fund that we raise through our partnership with Baylor College of Medicine. We do a lot of health related seminars like how to avoid gang violence, violence in school. We also do a series of workshops in our partnership with Citibank in term of financial education. By doing these partnerships, we can survive but we desperately need to find a source that can help us to hire an Executive Director who will coordinate all of our volunteers and programs. That's what we are looking for when coming to this meeting. Also, I'd like to have some workshops for our community to inform them what their rights are from your federal agencies.
7. **Beverly Gor (Asian American Health Coalition)** - First, I'd like to commend EPA for addressing some of my issues that are listed on the orange sheet. One of our goal is to educate the Asian community on various health topics. In fact, we are in partnership with Texas Medical Health Center. At the center library, we have a kiosk so that our customers can pick up many literatures on health topics. I've found many brochures that EPA developed in Asian languages, and I commend you on this. Some other things on my list are the toxic exposure in hair salons, nail salons, asthma, and water pollution.

- < Marla Hendriksson (EPA): The asthma is an issue not just for Asian children but all others as well. We have publications to educate people about secondhand smoke, lead, asbestos, and other environmental issues.

There is an analogy between the nail salon issue and the dry cleaning which has been working on for the past 10 years. Approximately 40% of drycleaning and garment care businesses is owned by Korean-American. The Design for the Environment (DfE) Program has been working with the drycleaning industry trade to educate the community on health risks. The risk from the use of perchloroethylene from dry cleaning processes has been greatly reduced. This involved a lot of cooperation between EPA and the dry cleaning industry. The approach would be similar with the nail care industry, although I'm not sure how much coalition there is with the nail salon, hair care industries just yet. We have been alerted to that issue in the past year. Tai and Region 6 have also been alerted to that. What we are doing now is looking to see what chemicals are out there. These salons normally have less than 10 employees and so it falls below the radar scope of OSHA. It will be more like an educational campaign than a regulatory campaign.

For the water issue, EPA is looking into this issue now with the National Environmental Justice Advisory Commission within the agency. There is a Fish Consumption Workgroup. If you have any contact or know anyone that you think might be interested, please refer them to me, especially here in the Gulf Coast. I'd really appreciate it.

On the issue of translation of these materials into Asian languages, that is a bigger issue in the government. There is a drive through an Executive Order on Limited English Proficiency that all federal agencies have been asked to work with. EPA is very strong on this issue as well. We're looking into more translations and finding a way to reach out to the community like public announcements, and getting into the press. We are working to create a translation protocol, but first we want to know in advance how much impact the program has on the issue of the

community before budgeting it. If you have any more questions about these, please e-mail me.

- < Epi Elizondo (HHS): Regarding the asthma, we have an Office of Minority Health Resource Center located in Rockville, Maryland where you can get information. The web address is [www.omhrc.gov](http://www.omhrc.gov). The information is currently primarily in English and Spanish, but the staff is working towards getting information translated into additional languages as well. I've already seen some material in other languages. You can also search for many other types of literature and documents from this website.
- 8. **Teresa Perez (FDIC) - We have financial educational classes for adults and if anyone is interested in partnership with FDIC to promote these classes, please let us know. Also, most of our brochures are in English but if there is a need, we will have them translated into Asian languages as well.**
- 9. **Don Willis (USDA) - We authorize stores to participate in the Food Stamp program. Many of our retailers in Houston area are Asians as well as other minority groups. We've recently developed a power point presentation in Vietnamese with the help of a local Vietnamese group, so we are looking forward to use that. We do have to educate retailers in our food stamp program and looking for ideas on how to better communicate with that group.**
- 10. **Karen Tso (Asian American Health Coalition) - FDA has some really good translations in Chinese, especially nutrition labels. This is a very good information to teach senior people about food safety. I've also received some information regarding nutrition. I don't know if they are in other language but I can find out. I think all federal agencies should get together to form the Department of Translation so that you can pass these information to the consumers because they really need it.**
- 11. **Gordon Gonzales (SSA) - There are nine Social Security offices in the Houston area. SSA pays about \$450 billions per year in benefits. Social Security pays around \$2 billions a year to the beneficiaries in the Houston metro area. SSA offices have employees of Asian Pacific Islander heritage to serve this population. My office, Houston Southwest, located at Southwest Freeway 59 and Fondren in Arena Tower 2 has 5 Asian American Pacific Islander employees. Social Security offices can provide translation services for all non-English speaking clients. SSA has an active outreach program and will provide speakers to any group that requests a presentation.**
- 12. **Mariela Melero-Chami (DOJ - Immigration & Naturalization Service) - We want a strong partnership with the Asian community in Houston. We want to have more effective communication and will explore every opportunity to do so. We applaud the organizers of this important dialogue and look forward to our participation.**

**Rogene Calvert (Councilman Quan's office) - One of the initiatives for the INS is putting an electronic kiosk in Asian languages to make it more accessible for our community. Do we have a date on it?**

- < Mariela Melero-Chami (DOJ - Immigration & Naturalization Service): We currently have an electronic kiosk in the Fiesta Mart located on 6200 Bellaire Blvd. The kiosk offers a variety of information/services to the Hispanic and Asian communities. We are currently exploring the possibility of a second kiosk in the Asian community and would like to into (with Ms. Calvert's facilitation) placing it inside the newest Hong Kong Food Market. We will need a strong community partnership in order to move this project forward. Partnership will address issues associated with placement, general maintenance and translation of key documents and messages as appropriate.

13. **Cathy Pham (VN TeamWork) - VN TeamWork is a non-profit organization. We offer free vaccination, immunization and teach many health related subject to the Vietnamese community. We have many working mothers who have small children. They make just not enough money to pay for babysitting. We need funding to open a child care center for them while they go to work. We also need a nursing home for our senior citizens. I've worked in this area for seven years and I've seen a lot of the elderly very lonely at home, but they don't want to go to American nursing home because our culture is different, our language is different, and our food is different. I hope we can get some funding to have an assisted-living or nursing home for these elders.**
14. **Ginru Lee (Taiwanese Heritage Society of Houston) - Our community, especially our senior citizens need to have physicians who are able not only to treat them but also to hold their hands, listen to their issues, concerns.**
  - < Epi Elizondo (HHS): Within the Minority Health, there is an increased emphasis on cultural competency which relates to what you're talking about. Through the National Health Services Corps, for example, there are scholarships and money for people that want to be trained as nurses, physicians, or physician assistants. They will pay back by working in a certain community. Certainly, we need the people that are doing the treating to also understand the underlying issues of the people that they treat. We couldn't all of the sudden produce the number of providers that we need from all different cultures. So the emphasis is to begin with to work with medical schools, nursing schools, and physician assistant schools, and other health profession schools to incorporate into their curriculum cultural competency training. So, at least their graduates can develop a certain amount of understanding and sensitivity to the people that they are treating. Under the new budget, I noted that there will be an increase to approximately 1,200 more community health centers across the nation. Maybe this is a resource that we might need to look at for Houston.
15. **Dr. Beng Ho (Houston's Mayors Senior Advisory Council) - I'm with the Advisory Council for the aging. I want to address two issues, one about the public housing for low income people, and another about the program for the youngsters who taking care of their elderly parents. We plan to do a public forum at the Vietnamese Community Center to talk about what is the need for public housing in the Houston area. We also have a \$900,000 award for the family care-givers program. The principle of that program is to encourage the children (or the youngsters) to take care of their parents. So the AAA is currently issuing RFQ Family Request for Qualification.**
16. **Nathan Tran (S.O.S Boat People) - I'd like to work with the representative of the Immigration Office.**

#### **NOTES FROM BRAINSTORM SESSION**

- < Carlos Mendoza (DOI - Fish and Wild Life Service) - I like the networking idea, that is communicate by e-mailing. I recommend us to look at what we have already had here and see what else people are interested in and translate what's needed. Also, I'd like to know how to attract students to the field of Fish and Wild Life Science instead of becoming doctor, lawyer...
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): It is one cornerstone of the four pillars in term of education. What we can do while kids are still at school, whether K to 12 or in college, is to encourage them about a career in various federal agencies because there is not a great influx into federal government when you have all the dot com start up companies.
- < Betty Campbell (DOL): Last year we were looking for a Vietnamese-speaking investigator and we got only two responses from San Francisco. The one that got our offer decided not to go, so we ended up hiring someone who can't speak Vietnamese. We do not have a network where I

can call and say I need someone.

- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): Now we certainly want to set up this nationally. At EPA, we have partnerships with Hispanic colleges and universities. What we don't have is one with a lot of Asian-American Pacific Islander students. We certainly need to establish this type of thing.
- < Anhlan Nguyen (Vietnamese Culture & Science Association): Is it possible to obtain an e-mail whenever these positions open? - because I can find one for you very quickly. We have a lot of people who are interested in those kind of work, but they are not aware of the opportunities. Is there a way to communicate with each other on these job openings?
- < Doug Lipka (EPA): Our Federal Executive Board has a website that all federal agencies are hooked into. We can list these openings on this website. Several years ago, a U.S. general store was set up in Houston so that everybody could walk in to pick up information. Now we are talking about a virtual general store like a kiosk that is located throughout the cities like post office, and community center. GSA and EPA are doing that in Dallas, and we can try it here. We can see if there is a funding to do that.
- < Ethel Bush (EEOC): Our agency has intern program, and we are working with universities. We have contracts and subcontracts working with the University of Houston. We hire outstanding students every year.
- < Dr. Beng Ho (Houston's Mayors Senior Advisory Council): I think websites are good, but you only go to website if you are looking for something specific. All federal agencies should have some sort of publications or newsletters so that people can thumb through to know whatsoever.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): Federal agencies do. The US government has the Office of Personnel Management, OPM. It lists is not only on the website but it is also available in hard copy that comes out every two weeks. It updates the announcements for job opportunities for all federal agencies. Public libraries, universities, or some certain places have that, and also on the website.
- < Dr. Beng Ho (Houston's Mayors Senior Advisory Council): Are you aware that there are two groups of Asian-Americans. One is the younger group who do not normally speak Chinese or Vietnamese because they were born here, and educated here. For those, they probably read the Houston Chronicle, and Mr. Zen Zheng can help. Those papers are good because you don't have to pay for advertising. The second group only speak Chinese or Vietnamese and they read community newspaper everyday. There is a need for a bilingual newspaper, Chinese, Vietnamese, and English. There is no one kind of mechanisms.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): No there isn't. What I recognize is that EPA has a limited ability to be able to target all Asian-American Pacific Islander communities to address their needs. Too many and too overwhelming. What we've been focusing on as our effort here in Houston is a dialogue with the Vietnamese community. That decision was based upon research done by Professor Kleinberg of Rice University. He is a Sociology Professor. He did a study on AAPI communities in Houston by looking at their social economics. The Chinese is very well-organized, very well-established. The Indian and Pakistan also are at a certain economic level. There are other Asian communities that are not quite where others are. My thought was to try working with the Vietnamese first, to try to address and identify their needs because there is perhaps a greater need there. That's why we have translated a number of documents into Vietnamese from our EPA office. If I can get some small successes that identify how this worked at a certain community, then we can replicate and extend it further. If I try to hit everybody all at once, we just set ourselves up for failure. So that's what I'm trying to do.
- < Kevin Collins (TDH): I love the idea of putting together a list serve to share information. I'd love to hear this information presented today - all captured, so that a position or issue paper can be

distributed. I heard individuals here talking about a mentoring program. I work at the Texas Department of Health, and to be honest with you, we do not have a mentoring program, and we don't have an avenue in place to look at the issue of diversity in our workplace. Maybe some of the issues presented in this issue paper, need to be brought up not only to my organization but to many other state agencies that do not have diversity in their leadership. Many issues and concerns that we are talking about here like the nurses' exam not being available in Asian language - only in English and Spanish. Those type of issues seem to be discriminatory, but I think the issue is that we have to begin (in some way) to holding people to be accountable. It's not acceptable for my organization or any organization not to have diversity in the year 2001. I don't care how you painted, how you marketed, or whatever you say,... we have to begin to stand up and say "why?" and demand someone to us why it is existing. These groups to come out at this meeting with issues that we can present further, and say "address this", and tell us why, or tell us "what you are doing about?", "Tell us that you realize there is an issue so that we can begin to make progress". That's what I'd love to see.

- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): This pretty much falls into the four pillars that EPA has set up, education pipeline, economic opportunities, community partnership, and employment and professional advancement.
- < Mariela Melero-Chami (DOJ - Immigration & Naturalization Service): We will meet with the Vietnamese groups here next week to discuss community workshops/partnerships.
- < Carlos Mendoza (DOI - Fish and Wild Life Service) - I'd like to have some US Fish and Wild Life documents to be translated into AAPI languages.
- < Betty Campbell (DOL): I'm interested in a town hall meeting and willing to provide the resource for any of these town hall meetings. DOL wants to spread our message out.
- < Ethel Bush (EEOC): EEOC also has a very active outreach program. We also would like to send our message out to the AAPI communities. Do you have an idea where we can have these town hall meetings?
- < Betty Campbell (DOL): We possibly can do it at a church or something like that.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): One of the challenges that we found last year was that not many people are interested in these meetings. Lisa went to a number of churches and handed out hundreds of translations and meeting announcements for a meeting that we had in July, but only around 50 community members showed up at our meeting. So, I want to put it out as a challenge - develop a communication strategy; how to get the word out. But I learned that we need to reach out through radio.
- < Betty Campbell (DOL): Recently in our office we provide a church bulletin insert in various languages.
- < Andy Hardwick (SSA): Social Security has translated a fact sheet about the disability program into Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Laos, Cambodian, Tagalog, Korean, and other languages. We also have an information package that is in English and Spanish. We've just came out with an article in Korean. We're trying to have our information available in different languages. Also, I'd like people to know that any applicant who comes to Social Security office has the right to request for a translator and we will provide one without any charge. We're open to do any type of information program in churches or social organization to tell people about Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income programs.
- < Alex Janovsky (Department of Education): We need to have a shared network for AAPI community members so that they can access for information on funding available from various resources. Funding opportunities from the U.S. Department of Education can be found at



<http://www.ed.gov/funding.html> . Also, we need to solicit a partnership from corporation, religion, and community in translating some of the more worthwhile publications. It is a goal of the Department of Education to have publications printed in many different languages; however, since we have no timetable for this goal, it could take a while. But, certainly, it would benefit the AAPI community to have these materials.

- < Teresa Perez (FDIC): We are discussing a Money Smart Program with MetLife Financial Services, and the Vietnamese Culture and Science Association. The training modules are presently in English. We expect to translate them into Spanish by the end of this year. Afterwards, if there is a need, translations into other languages will be considered.
- < Chris Colaneri (RDI): I work with the refugee organization and I know that the YMCA and the Multicultural Alliance do sponsor English classes for the Vietnamese.
- < Epi Elizondo (HHS): In the Office of Minority Health Resource Center, there is a document that talks about how to access grant money for health services. In the regional office, we're trying to put together a data group because it is even difficult for federal agencies themselves to understand their own data across agencies. We're trying to group it together so that it will help bridge the gap between agencies. It will help to access where the grants are, and how to get information to apply for them. A lot of these grants require data. And that data, a lot of times is not available to certain groups. Smaller groups a lot of times are not represented in our federal agency data, and if they are - they're lumped into one group. We're trying to get to the point where we can break down that data to community level. If anybody wants to work with me on that data group, let me know. Our region includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Louisiana.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): Marla just gave me a Summary of all available EPA Community Grant Programs that are on our website. It lists eleven grant programs from Children's Health Protection, Environmental Education to Solid Waste Management.
- < Anhlan Nguyen (Vietnamese Culture & Science Association): Is it possible that EPA can set up some workshops because when we apply for grants, we need some techniques on how to write for grants?
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): I tried to have some of my folks come down here this Spring but we didn't get enough interest from both the Asian and Hispanic communities in Houston. I will come back again and make that offer to you.
- < Marla Hendriksson (EPA): On EPA website, if you click on Economic Opportunities, there is a Grant Writing Tutorial which will walk you through the process of writing for a grant.
- < Paula Flores-Gregg (EPA): Maybe for the next plans for grant writing workshops we (EPA) can invite other federal agencies to participate as well.
- < Nathan Tran (S.O.S Boat People): We've received a small EJ grant from EPA for the first time; therefore, we have some experience in carrying it out to the community. For Vietnamese people, we do not like to attend meetings or group discussions. A lot of people like to have access to free materials because after working hours, they have a lot to read; therefore, make it accessible instead of having a session or a group meeting.
- < Binh Nguyen (Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services): I hear that many different community groups need funding for their programs and they also want to know how to receive funding information. There are a lot of federal and state money available to community groups. For federal programs, they can subscribe to the Federal Register for grants or contracts announcement (RFP). Right now, in Texas as well as many other communities throughout the US, the federal government (HRSA) is pushing for 100% accessibility and 0% disparity for

everybody through the Community Access Program. The Health Department has just received \$1 million for this project. Another project that we are working on is to investigate the feasibility to set up more community health centers (Federally Qualified Health Centers - FQHC). President Bush has just proposed \$240 millions for next year to set up 1100 new centers. Right now, we have about 1300. He indicated that in order for groups to successfully compete for federal grants or contracts, we need to work together and to form coalitions, collaborations to address common issues. We also must be able to tell funding agencies why do we need their financial support by conducting needs assessment or at least start to collect data related to problems that we plan to address.

- < Ethel Bush (EEOC): EEOC would like to explain to the new immigrants their rights when they first get their job, even for students. There are a lot of oppositions in the workplace, real pros and cons. We would be glad to form a partnership with the community, whether in a town hall or at a community center.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): This is great. I think by us coming together today in Houston and sharing with each other the different things, we can tackle different pieces here. We can set up a network so that we can have among federal, state, and local agencies for opportunities for discussion. Some of the future pieces that we need to do around the four pillars would be a more long term project, developing communication strategy on what are we going to do, how we can tackle different things so we can not only share what's available, but also share our successes. If we can tell the community here what we are doing, and what we can do, I think that will help to generate thoughts and ideas. Often times, I went to meetings that people asked us for things that are well beyond our scope or ability to even assist. By just doing these different things, will help the community get an idea on what we can offer in terms of services and support.

We will pull all of our notes together and get them out to everybody so that you can help us to identify what we may miss or to clarify on the things you've said. Then we can work on prioritizing or categorizing what we might want to tackle first. I know that we cannot tackle everything. One of the ideas that Paula had (and she can talk to us about it today), and also Doug Lipka with the Federal Executive Board, is the concept of Yellow Pages book. This is certainly one product that I'd like to come out with for the community here.

- < Paula Flores-Gregg (EPA): I'm not sure if you already have a "yellow pages for AAPI services" in Houston. Dallas has a Spanish version. It has everything from questions on citizenship to other governments services. It also includes ads for local businesses and local organizations. I'm just wondering if this would be something worth exploring?
- < Rogene Calvert (Councilman Quan's office): We do have Chinese and Vietnamese Yellow Pages. All we need to do is make sure they have a good listing of federal agencies and services.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): They probably produce them every year. What we can do is find out the timing of that and collect information and give it to them so that they can publish in their own language for contacts.
- < Marla Hendriksson (EPA): Every two years, the Chinese American Organization puts out a publication, a directory of AAPI organizations, federal agencies, businesses, community groups, advocacy groups, and health organizations. You can get it by contacting the OCA. I'm not sure if they have one this year, but they did last year. You can go to their website at [www.ocanatl.org](http://www.ocanatl.org) and get it by paying \$10.
- < Rogene Calvert (Councilman Quan's office): I'm the local chapter President. Our local office is working on a local Asian Americans Resource Book, a directory of different community organizations. We've been working on this for a year.

Also, we're talking about trying to get these information out to the community in ethnic papers and the radio. Zen and I are both active members of the Asian Americans Press Club. We're trying to strengthen all organizations so that many agencies and companies begin to put more information in them. We want to put out that list as well.

As soon as we get this Resource Directory, we will make sure that everyone on the mailing list gets a copy.

- < Marla Hendriksson (EPA): EPA created a resource directory for internal use. I encourage all other federal agencies here to create one for their own. What we did was we pulled information from the OCA directory and other places. The organizations that really pertain EPA are health agencies and environmental groups that we need to establish a better rapport with, to get their feedback on environmental and health issues. This is very vital because they can represent AAPIs in the Federal Advisory Committee. AAPI are not well represented in FACs and without representation, your voice will not be heard. For federal agencies, you can put together your own database or directory of organizations that your managers should be better in touch with - whether local, state or federal. We find it to be very effective already. If you are not there yet or would like to be, please let me know so that I can put you there.
- < Tai-ming Chang (EPA): I'd like for us to be able to meet again to touch base. I don't want to wait another year to come back to Houston to sit down with you folks. What I'm proposing is for federal, state, local agencies to try to get back together to talk about things at least once a month. We can get a conference call that we can swap information as well as e-mail.

The next step for us is to consolidate our notes and send them out to you so that you can have a copy on what we talked about today, and the brainstorming ideas and suggestions. What I'm trying to do is keep us working together at federal, state, local agencies level to figure out what we are doing on these things because translation is a big question. Sometimes you might not have people in your agency to translate but others may have people who have time to possibly do that. So the next thing I'll do is setting up a call for federal, state, local folks in July. I know July is a heavy vacation time but for those who can be available we can do one in July. We'll follow up with some phone calls individually to talk to a various federal agencies from our office to get more feedback on how we might go forward. I'll keep coordinating with Councilman Quan's office who has been so supportive of this, and we appreciate that.

So, some conference calls then some face-to-face meetings as well maybe toward this fall to get back together to be able to talk and maybe to figure out what we can do, whether a community fair, or an open house, or a town hall meeting. We'll figure it out and plan it for summer or fall. Also, we'll set up an e-mail list for everyone.

Thank you so much for coming out today to talk with us about what you are doing at your agency and what your organization are interested in. This exchange is very helpful and I appreciate your time. Again, thank you.